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SUBJECT: SPLM SHAKE-UP IN SOUTHERN KORDOFAN

REF: KHARTOUM 944

¶11. (SBU) Summary: On January 24 Poloff met with Sadiq Mansour, Deputy Speaker of the Southern Kordofan Legislative Assembly, who stated that he and 31 other members of the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) in Southern Kordofan had recently been dismissed from the party by Abdel Azziz (SPLM), Southern Kordofan's Deputy Governor. Mansour said that he and the others were dismissed for criticizing Azziz, who they see as too close to Southern Kordofan's governor, Ahmed Haroun (NCP), and too far from the SPLM party-line. Mansour said that the discord created by the dismissals has resulted in other SPLM defections, and that he will run for the legislative assembly in the April elections as an independent candidate representing Nuba interests. Mansour acknowledged that some economic development had taken place in Southern Kordofan but said that it is not significant and will be terminated by the central government if Haroun is not elected in April. Fragmentation of the SPLM in Southern Kordofan in the run up to elections is a gift to the NCP and bodes ill for the SPLM's ability to maintain cohesion across tribal lines. End Summary.

SPLM Leaders Dismissed for Criticism

¶12. (SBU) On January 24 Poloff met with Sadiq Mansour, Deputy Speaker of the Southern Kordofan Legislative Assembly, who stated that he and 31 other members of the SPLM in Southern Kordofan had recently been dismissed from the party by Abdel Azziz (SPLM), Southern Kordofan's Deputy Governor. The dismissed include the Minister of Education, the Minister of Rural Development, and the Commissioners of Kadugli and Talodi Counties. Mansour stated that the dismissals stemmed from statements he and others in the party made to SPLM leadership expressing discontent with the leadership of Azziz.

¶13. (SBU) Specifically, Mansour said that the partnership that Azziz has with Southern Kordofan's governor, Ahmed Haroun (NCP) is too one-sided, that Azziz does not challenge Haroun enough, that, in effect, Azziz has slipped from the SPLM party-line and is acting as a member of the National Congress Party (NCP). (Note: The Haroun/Azziz partnership, which has received wide-spread praise in the international community (Ref A), does appear one-sided, in the sense that Haroun and Azziz always appear together and Azziz almost never speaks. End Note.) Mansour said that the dismissals have taken place over a period of weeks, starting in late December, and that he had been dismissed on January 1. Mansour said that he and

other dismissed members of the SPLM are appealing their dismissal to SPLM leadership in Juba and that Azziz has been called to Juba to explain his decision.

¶4. (SBU) On January 26, Emboff spoke to Arno Antilo, Secretary General of the SPLM in Southern Kordofan, who stated that the dismissed party members were dismissed for "insulting our leadership and instigating their tribes against the party." According to Antilo, the SPLM conducted a periodic review of the performance of its members serving in the Government of National Unity and decided to replace some of those serving, including Mansour, with new members. Antilo did not indicate that Mansour or anyone else had been selected for replacement based on corruption or poor performance. Antilo stated that the members selected for replacement refused to accept the decision, and it was at this point that the insults and tribal instigation occurred, for which these members were dismissed from the SPLM.

Deputy Speaker Will Run as an Independent, for the Nuba

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¶5. (SBU) Mansour stated that he will run for the Southern Kordofan Legislative Assembly as an independent candidate. When asked who his election supporters will be, Mansour, a Nuba, said he would not run for election on a tribal basis, as politics based on tribal affiliation is senseless. Mansour claimed that he has supporters throughout the state, including among the Arabs of Southern Kordofan. This was somewhat contradicted, however, when Mansour stated that the Nuba will support him because the Nuba want a Nuba leader, who is dedicated to Nuba interests. He added, "Azziz can dismiss me from the SPLM, but not from my tribe." (Note: Azziz is from the Masalit tribe of western Darfur, though he has married into the Ajang, the largest Nuba sub-tribe. End Note.)

¶6. (SBU) Mansour stated that these dismissals are creating confusion in the SPLM in Southern Kordofan. He said that a number of people have left the party in anger, with some of those joining SPLM-Democratic Change (SPLM-DC), the party of SPLM "turn-coat" Lam Akol. Mansour said that he has also been heavily recruited by SPLM-DC, but that he will not join a party that he sees as an agent of the NCP. He added that he still supports the SPLM and hopes to return to the party sooner or later as it is the only viable party for the Nuba.

Development Progress in Southern Kordofan Down-played

¶7. (SBU) Mansour down-played the performance of Haroun and Azziz and said they are outsiders lacking significant support in the state. He acknowledged that Haroun has brought some economic development to Southern Kordofan, but said that it was mostly window dressing in an effort to get elected, and that the central government will end funding for development initiatives if Haroun is not elected in April. He noted that Haroun has formed many committees, councils and commissions, but stated that their primary purpose was finding a role for people who might otherwise make trouble for Haroun. Mansour added that Haroun has not implemented the security arrangements of the CPA, that Popular Defense Forces (PDFs) in the state are increasing, and that the state appears to

be preparing for war. (Note: PDF, (militia forces supported by the Sudan Armed Forces (SAF)), which pursuant to the CPA should have been disbanded or integrated into the SAF, were readily visible in Southern Kordofan's capital Kadugli on a December visit by Poloff. End Note.)

¶8. (SBU) Comment: Fragmentation of the SPLM in Southern Kordofan in the run up to elections is a gift to the NCP. Southern Kordofan is likely to be highly contested in the elections and Mansour is a significant figure there. His dismissal, along with the other dismissals, will weaken the SPLM's election performance. Azziz's hidebound response to criticism may have been an over-reaction. It also demonstrates that the command structure of the SPLM retains significant vestiges of its origins as a military entity. Mansour's tendency to fall back on politics by tribal affiliation, after acknowledging the flaws in this approach, is also unfortunate. End Comment.

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